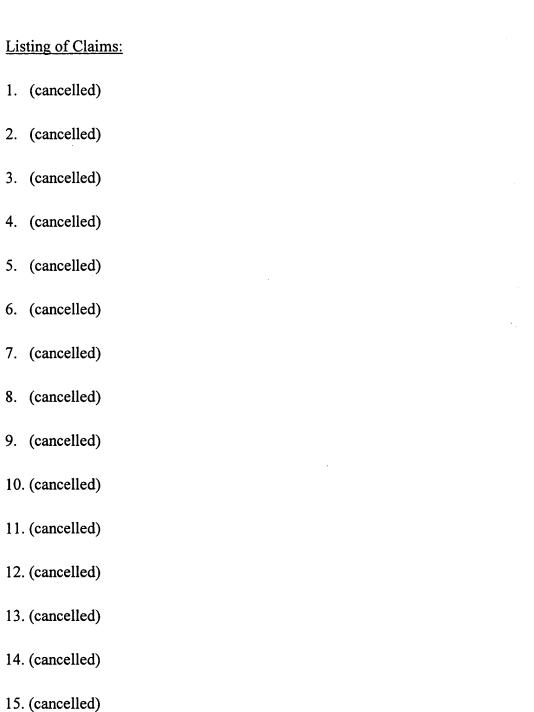## Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (cancelled)

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (cancelled)

5. (cancelled)

6. (cancelled)

7. (cancelled)

8. (cancelled)

9. (cancelled)

10. (cancelled)

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) A method of operating a device providing a service allowing a plurality of users to communicate with each other by exchanging messages, comprising:

> obtaining for each of said plurality of users an indicator indicating determining if said each of said plurality of users wishes to pay for use of said service, and thereby identifying classifying each of said plurality of users as a paying user or a non-paying user, therefrom;

> allowing paying users to communicate with all of said plurality of users paying users and said non-paying users;

> restricting non-paying users from initiating communication with other non-paying users, while allowing non-paying users to initiate communication with paying users;

> calculating costs of said service for each of said paying users, based on time each of said paying users uses said service.

18. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein said device permits bridging of telephone calls between said plurality of users.

19. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein said device permits said users to exchange messages with each other in near real-time.

20. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein said allowing comprises allowing paying users to bridge telephone calls with all other of said plurality of users, and

> wherein said restricting comprises preventing non-paying users from bridging telephone calls with other non-paying users.

21. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein said device comprises a telephone interface and a storage medium, and wherein said method comprises exchanging saved messages between said users.

22. (cancelled)

23. (currently amended) A method of operating a message exchange device comprising:

storing greetings originating with each of a plurality of users using said message exchange device;

obtaining from each of said plurality of users an indicator of whether that user wishes to pay to use said message exchange device, thereby classifying each of said plurality of users as a paying or non-paying user;

allowing paying users access to all of <u>said</u> stored greetings <u>of said paying and non-paying users by way of said message exchange device</u>;

allowing non-paying users access to only those <u>of said stored</u> greetings originating with paying users <u>by way of said message exchange device</u>;

calculating costs of using said message exchange device for each of said paying users, based on time each of said paying users uses said message exchange device.

24. (original) The method of claim 23, wherein said greetings comprise voice messages and said allowing paying users comprises allowing paying users to listen to all of said stored greetings.

25. (original) The method of claim 23, wherein each of said plurality of users is currently using said message exchange device, and further comprising allowing users to exchange messages in near real-time.

26. (cancelled)

27. (currently amended) A message exchange server comprising computer readable memory storing

a plurality of messages, each of said messages associated with a user of said server;

a plurality of indicators, each identifying whether a user pays to use said message exchange server and is thereby a paying user, or whether a user does not pay to use said message exchange server and is thereby a non-paying user;

software, adapting said server to

allow those paying users access through said server to all of said plurality of messages associated with said paying users and said non-paying users;

allow non-paying users access to only those of said messages associated with paying users;

calculate costs of using said server for each of said paying users, based on time each of said paying users has used said message exchange server.

28. (original) The server of claim 27, wherein said messages comprise digitized voice messages.

29. (previously presented) The server of claim 28, wherein said computer readable memory further stores an amount representative of prepayment of users paying to use said server.

30. (currently amended) A computer readable medium, storing computer executable instructions that when loaded at a message exchange server, used to exchange messages between users, adapt said message exchange server to:

store greetings originating with each of a plurality of users using said message exchange server;

obtain from each of said plurality of users an indicator of whether that user wishes to pay to use said message exchange server, thereby classifying each of said plurality of users as a paying or non-paying user;

allow paying users access through said server to all of said stored greetings originating with said paying users and said non-paying users;

allow non-paying users through said server access to only those of said greetings originating with paying users;

calculate costs of using said server for each of said paying users, based on time each of said paying users has used said message exchange server.

31. (currently amended) A method of operating a device providing a service allowing a plurality of users to communicate with each other, comprising:

for each of said plurality of users determining if said each of said plurality of users wishes to pay for use of said service, and thereby identifying each of said users as a paying user or a non-paying user;

allowing paying users to communicate with paying and non-paying users of the opposite gender by way of said device;

restricting non-paying users from communicating with other non-paying users of the opposite gender by way of said device;

calculating costs of said service for each of said paying users, based on a measure of use of said service.

32. (currently amended) A method of operating a message exchange device comprising:

storing greetings originating with each of a plurality of users using said message exchange device;

obtaining from each of said plurality of users an indicator of whether that user wishes to pay to use said message exchange device, thereby classifying each of said plurality of users as a paying or non-paying user;

allowing paying users access to said greetings of said paying users and said non-paying users by way of said message exchange device;

allowing non-paying users access to only those of said greetings originating with paying users by way of said message exchange device;

calculating costs of using said device for each of said paying users, based a measure of use of said device.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein said measure of use of said device comprises measure of time spent using said device.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein said measure of use of said device comprises measure of the number of greetings each paying user has access.